

DATE: December 4, 2002

SUBJECT: NW Energy Coalition's comments on the
Washington State Energy Strategy Update



PRESENTED BY: Lisa Noble, NW Energy Coalition

The NW Energy Coalition is an alliance of nearly 100 environmental, civic and human service organizations, progressive utilities and businesses from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska and British Columbia. We promote energy conservation and renewable energy resources, consumer and low-income protection and fish and wildlife restoration on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Our policy director, Nancy Hirsh, was involved with the advisory committee; she is out of the country at the moment and asked me to provide the following comments at tonight's meeting.

I understand that the advisory committee addressed multiple issues and developed 13 guiding principles over the course of their meetings. There is only one main issue I am going to address tonight and it ties in to the last guiding principle which is to "Promote energy policies that maintain and/or improve environmental quality". The guiding principles in general fail to address global warming and CO2 emissions. The Coalition feels that greenhouse gas emissions mitigation should be included as part of the state energy strategy update for 2003 for the following reasons:

- Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions represent a critical environmental challenge with very serious consequences for the global community, including water supply disruption, air quality deterioration, and adverse human health impacts.
- According to the University of Washington greenhouse gases are the most likely explanation for observed warming in the Pacific Northwest. Scientists predict that global warming will impact the Pacific Northwest in the next 50 years by reducing snow pack, increasing precipitation in winter and decreasing precipitation in summer, all of these leading to adverse impacts on irrigated agriculture, forests, salmon. The region's traditional base load power source, hydroelectric dams, are also threatened by summer flows 20-30% beneath current levels, with significant impacts on summer power production and rates.
- Governor Gary Locke understands that global warming is a real and potent danger. He has spoken eloquently and often about the environmental and economic impacts of global warming. He views clean energy technologies as part of the solution.
- In the absence of specific policies to reduce emissions, the environmental costs of CO2 emissions remain totally external. This represents a substantial public subsidy – it shifts a major cost of production from the producer to society at large. Policies that help internalize these external costs are essential if the state is serious about addressing climate change.

- The update to the state energy strategy guiding principles must acknowledge the tremendous economic and environmental costs associated with climate change for Washington state. In addition, the issues and recommendations section should detail more specifically the need for action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and policies that more accurately aligns costs and benefits and increases economic efficiency. Generic references to protecting the environment and reducing environmental impacts are insufficient to capture the magnitude of the impact of climate change on Washington state.

The NW Energy Coalition would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments, we hope they are helpful to structuring the State Energy Strategy Update. Along with these comments, I have attached a copy of an 8-page brochure on the Tellus Study which was released this fall. The Tellus Study outlines how the Pacific Northwest can meet all load growth in the region over the next 20 years with cost-effective conservation and renewables. If you would like a full copy of the study, you can download it off of our website at www.nwenergy.org or we can send you a hard copy. Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Lisa Noble
NW Energy Coalition